

# **MASTER PLAN**

## **Background**

This plan creates a civic district and identifies sites for a park, library and neighborhood service center in Ballard's core urban village area. This plan also recommends design criteria and guidelines for the park, streets and buildings. The municipal center concept emerged in the neighborhood planning process and will be realized with significant new public investments in the park, library and city service center. Under this plan, these investments will be supported by both new and existing institutions (e.g. Leif Erikson hall, St. Luke's Church, library) and a consistent new streetscape design. Although the municipal center image will be directly associated with the park, library and other civic buildings, the civic character of the district should be common to the entire plan area.

The area is predominantly zoned for commercial development (NC3) with a 65' height limit. This zoning is intended to create a 'pedestrian-oriented' retail and service district. Single use residential buildings are only allowed as a conditional use. This district may serve the surrounding neighborhoods, the larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of retail businesses, as well as offices and business support services. This plan suggests code modifications and allowable departures that will preserve the existing development capacity and achieve a better and more appropriate fit to the community.

## **BALLARD MUNICIPAL CENTER PROGRAM**

### **Ballard Library Replacement**

The current 7,296 sq. ft. library is located at 5711 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW with an adjacent surface parking lot. The Libraries for All program calls for replacement of the current library with a new 15,000 sq. ft. building at a cost of \$6.5 million. The Library will not select its site until after the Master Plan is completed. The Master Plan evaluated various alternatives within the Municipal Center planning area such as the current Safeway, the Viking Bank, U. S. Bank, Bartells, and the Fabric Store as potential locations for either the Library or other parts of the Neighborhood Center. The expanded library is expected to open in 2002.

### **Construction of New 1.5-Acre Park**

Two alternative sites for a new 1.5-acre park were evaluated, including the current Safeway site, or split into two areas: one .9-acre area in the Safeway/QFC block and a 0.7-acre area on either the current Viking Bank, or the Fabric Store site. This evaluation resulted in the Safeway as the recommended site. The design of the park will take place in 2001 and could be constructed in 2003 if funding becomes available.

### **QFC Site**

The Master Plan strongly encourages a mixed use project (retail with housing above and parking mostly below) on the current QFC site. This sort of project will add to the density of the Municipal Center area and provide a more compatible edge to the new park than the blank wall that currently exists. This could be designed in 2000-2001 with construction in 2002 and occupancy be early 2003.

### **Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) Relocation**

The 1999 Community Center Levy provided funding for a new Ballard Neighborhood Service Center, to replace the leased space on NW Market Street. This facility is expected to also accommodate a Community Policing Center, Magistrate and community meeting space. The NSC is proposed to be approximately 4,000 square feet.



## Analysis

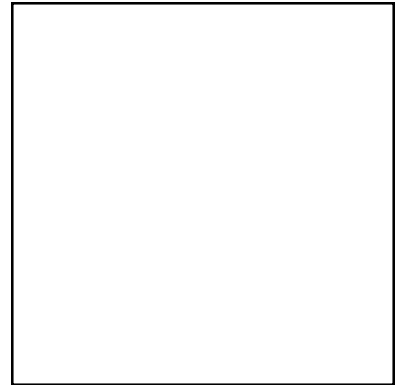
The streets in the plan area and surrounding Ballard core area exhibit diverse characteristics. Market Street is the primary retail street. The continuity of the street wall and storefronts, broad sidewalks and landscaping and pedestrian amenities make Market Street Ballard's signature street. This image is supported by the location of Bergen Place on Market Street as Ballard's central square.

The avenues in the Ballard Avenue Landmark District follow the railroad and the shoreline geometry at approximately 45 degrees to the city's street grid. Only alternating avenues north of NW Market Street were developed, resulting in long east/west blocks that restrict north south movement. Mid-block crossings have developed at the old Carnegie Library and the Ballard Square Building to make up for this. Since 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW carries heavy traffic loads and is difficult for pedestrians to cross and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue is less central to the area, 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW provided the best site for new civic buildings. 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW also ties directly to Bergen Place and the historic district.

East/west streets currently serve as a "back door" to NW Market Street as well as providing service, parking and local access. 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW is more of a through street leading to the Post Office. The residential in character further north begins at 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW.

Two assumptions influenced the development of planning alternatives: 1) a new park will be located on the existing Safeway site, and 2) the QFC food store will remain in its current location and may be redeveloped with retail, housing and structured parking. The Safeway location for the park serves both the residential and commercial areas and presents the best opportunity to secure a single large parcel of property.

The Steering Committee stressed the importance of reflecting the character and history of Ballard in this plan. In addition to the Scandinavian and Northern European traditions, fishing and other maritime activities were considered important and relevant. The many masonry, often brick, buildings were identified as characteristic of the area and reflective of Ballard's informal, blue collar tradition. It was felt that the public areas should exhibit craftsmanship, quality and natural materials.



*Central Ballard's blocks are long with few opportunities to circulate north and south.*



*Ballard Waterfront/ Maritime activity.*

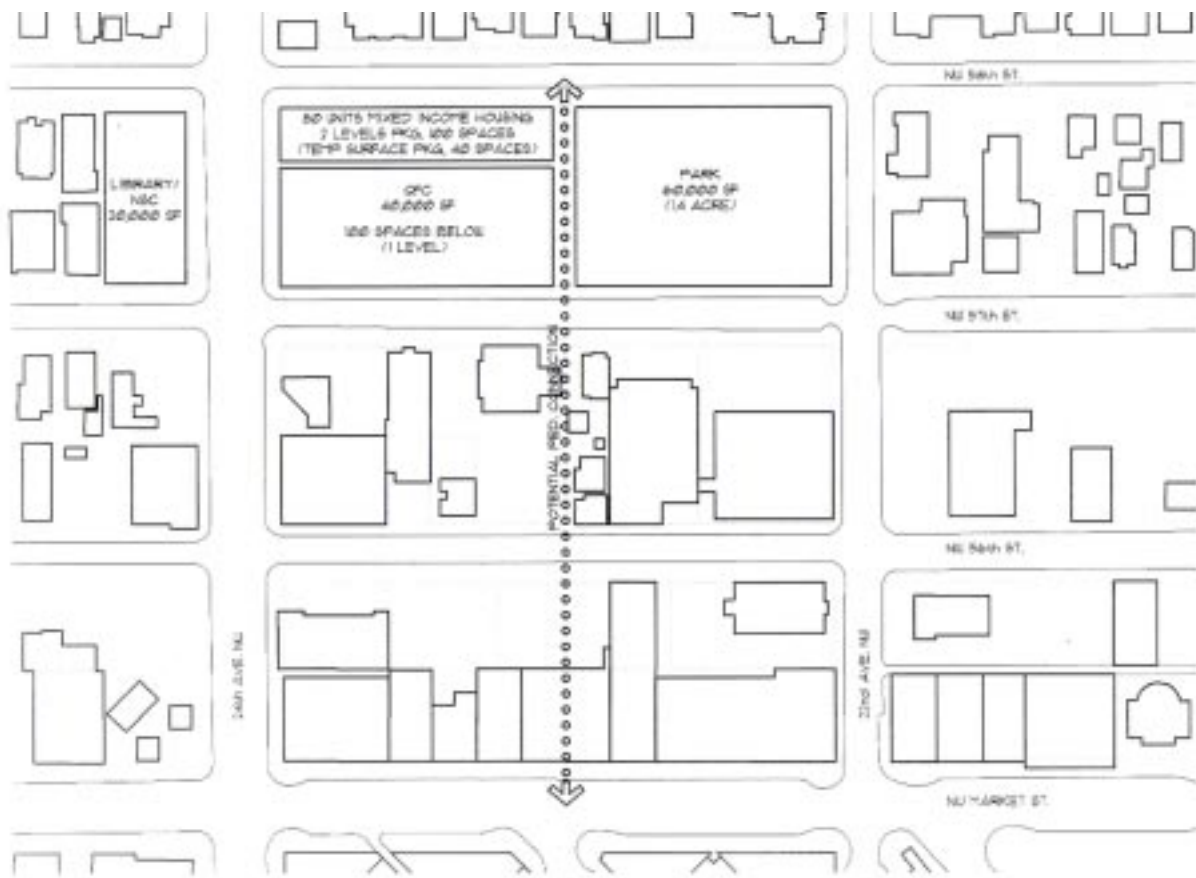


*Photo of historic Ballard.*

## **Park and Library Location Alternatives**

Eight alternatives were developed that illustrated locations for the new city neighborhood service center and library. These included keeping the library on the existing site, and locating the library on the Safeway site. Opportunities for future expansion of the park beyond the Safeway property, were also considered and highlighted in each alternative. Concerns about pedestrian access to the current library site and the library's concern about becoming the defacto park stewards eliminated some alternatives. A preferred alternative was selected by the steering committee through several meetings and the application of six criteria: expansion, availability, accessibility and visibility, cost, security and centralization of activities.

This preferred alternative provides two optional locations for the library, each of equal merit and located on 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW. The options locate this building either directly south of the park on a site currently leased by the Bartell drug store, or on the opposite corner to the southeast on the site currently leased by US Bank. In each option, the library is combined with the neighborhood service center. The community desires that the existing businesses such as Bartell's or US Bank, should be relocated in the immediate area.



*Alternatives included maintaining the existing library site (Alt A)...*



and mid block sites (Alt E).

